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THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN MARITAL THERAPY ENACTMENTS  
AND COUPLE COMMUNICATION

by

Paul Floyd Kindall

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Family and Human Development

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## ABSTRACT

The Association Between Marital Therapy Enactments  
and Couple Communication

by

Paul Floyd Kindall, Master of Science

Utah State University, 1998

Major Professor: Dr. Scot M. Allgood  
Department: Family and Human Development

This exploratory study focused on the use of positive, negative, and neutral enactments in couple therapy and the effectiveness of each type of enactment in immediate changes in specific communication behaviors. The sample consisted of 37 videotaped segments of the 10 minutes before and the 10 minutes after an enactment. Communication behaviors were coded using the Marital Interaction Coding System-Global (MICS-G). Paired  $t$  tests were used to test the differences between pre- and post-enactment scores. Positive enactments ( $n = 20$ ) were not related to positive nor negative communication behaviors. There were not enough negative enactments ( $n = 2$ ) to test whether they were related to negative or positive communication behaviors. The null hypothesis that neutral enactments ( $n = 15$ ) would not affect the positive nor the negative communication behaviors was



supported. The lack of statistical significance may be due to the small, homogeneous sample (religion, race, and time married).

(85 pages)

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

There is ample research documenting the relationship between communication and marital satisfaction (Christensen, Russell, Miller, & Peterson, 1998; Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1993; Vangelisti & Huston, 1994). For this reason, assessing and modifying communication has been incorporated in various marital therapy approaches. According to Bray and Jouriles (1995), the more effective marital therapy approaches should include interventions that address the communication patterns of the couple, verbal interactions in the session, communication skills training, and conflict resolution. Following the ideas of this research, couple and family therapy often incorporates some form of communication skills training (Guerney, Brock, & Coufal, 1986) or attention to communication patterns and styles (Gottman, 1994b). Including assessment of and training in communication skills is intended to improve the communication within the relationship as a couple attends therapy.

According to recent outcome research on the effectiveness of marital therapy, Bray and Jouriles (1995) pointed out that there are few differences in the outcomes of the different schools of marital therapy. They and others (Lambert & Bergin, 1994) concluded that the interventions that are making marital therapy effective must be those components that are held common among the differing approaches. Enactments are one of the common interventions. An enactment is defined as a therapeutic process in which the couple talks directly to each other and the therapist coaches the interaction. The use of an enactment type of intervention is considered a routine and standard technique across the various approaches to couple therapy (L'Abate, Ganahl, & Hansen, 1986; Reid & Helmer, 1986). However, the use of

enactment-type interventions has received relatively little research attention. This research will focus on the use of enactments within the therapy session and their efficacy. More specifically, this study will examine couple therapy sessions that contain an enactment. The type of enactment, either positive, negative, or neutral, will be assessed. A comparison will be made between the couple's communication prior to the enactment with the communication used by the couple after the enactment. This information will then be evaluated to determine the immediate impact of enactments in couple therapy. Measuring the long-term effectiveness of enactments will not be conducted because the data collected only tested for the change occurring directly following the enactment.

### Theoretical Framework

Systems theory is the most useful theory for understanding the rationale for this research. Systems theory is a way of looking at a group in order to identify how the members of the group are interrelated and to identify the processes that maintain their interrelatedness. According to systems theory, the essential elements of description and explanation are the patterns, processes, and communications that occur within the system. Systems theory grew out of General Systems Theory and cybernetics (Nichols & Schwartz, 1998). General Systems Theory is a broader interdisciplinary approach used to consider all types of systems ranging from abstract mathematical concepts to thermostats and from amoebas to families (Becvar & Becvar, 1996). Cybernetics is the study of self-corrective mechanisms or systems. Bateson, Haley, Ackerman, and others were influential in combining General Systems Theory and cybernetic ideas and in solidifying many of the main concepts of systems theory as applied to the family (Guttman, 1991; Nichols & Schwartz, 1998). Some of these concepts include positive and negative feedback, homeostasis, the family as a

rule-governed system, the necessity of communication in maintaining the system, issues of control and power, circular causality, and first and second order change (Gladding, 1998; Guttman, 1991; Nichols & Schwartz, 1998). These concepts form the basis for most family therapists to understand family interaction. This understanding of systems concepts facilitates and guides desired changes in marital and family therapy.

Systems exist due to the processes and relationships between the members of any given system. These processes and relationships are maintained and defined by the nature and type of communication between the members. Therefore, communication creates the system and is essential for its operation (Nichols & Schwartz, 1998). This being true, in order for a therapist to be able to begin to understand the system with which he or she is working, the manner of communication creating the processes and relationships must be able to be seen in the therapy session. The use of enactments is an ideal way to view communication. An enactment can help the couple deal with emotion, increase positive communication, and build communication skills that may generalize to their everyday interactions. When members face each other and begin to communicate, sequences of interaction will occur that are similar to those practiced outside the therapy room (Minuchin, 1974). The use of specific types of enactments in couple therapy by the therapist can also provide specific results within the system. For example, the use of a positive enactment intervention might increase the likelihood of validation, facilitation, and problem-solving communication patterns within the system. The same reasoning would imply that the use of negative enactment interventions might result in more negative communication patterns, such as conflict, invalidation, and withdrawal, and neutral enactment interventions would not change the communication patterns.

## Definitions

### Communication Defined

Gottman (1994b) has claimed that one of the better definitions is found in the ideas of Raush, Barry, Hertel, and Swain (1974) in regards to understanding and defining communication. Raush et al. (1974) stated that communication cannot truly be considered communication until the information that has been sent has been received. Raush et al. described communication as an

... event, meaning anything that can be pointed to, delimited, set off from something else---a gesture, a statement, a state of weather, a political or social happening, a word, a poem---and to speak of the relationship between the events transmitted from a source (Sue says, "Let's watch the TV special") to the events received (or evoked) at a specified destination (Bob grimaces). (1974, p.19)

Instead of saying that, "One cannot not communicate," (Watzlawick, Beaven, & Jackson, 1967), Raush et al. stated, "If what I do has no effect whatsoever on you, then I have not communicated with you. Communication occurs when what I do affects you in some way" (1974, p. 18). The emphasis is not necessarily placed on what information is sent, but rather on the relationship set up by the transmission of the information and the responses this information evokes.

This manner of viewing and defining communication fits well with the research on enactments in marital therapy. The relationship within the enactment is set up by what is communicated, whether verbal or nonverbal. Enactments are a purposeful intervention in couple therapy. The overriding goal of an enactment is to increase the complexity of the couple's communication and to help the couple develop more competent communicational transactions to create beneficial change in their marital system (Minuchin, 1974).



### Enactment Defined

An enactment, for the purpose of this study, is defined as a therapeutic process in which the couple talks directly to each other and the therapist coaches the content and the process of the couple's interaction. Reid and Helmer (1986) include enactments as a common technique used in family therapy. The use of enactments in couple therapy can facilitate several different processes including changing communication patterns within the session, discussing underlying emotion, developing problem solving abilities, producing new insight into the relationship, and giving the couple the ability to emphasize the strengths of each partner. The use of enactments may also lead to a stronger therapeutic relationship and the generalization of behaviors outside of the therapy setting.

### Purpose of Study

The use of enactment interventions in couple therapy has not been empirically studied. This thesis focused on the use of enactments within marital therapy sessions and the immediate influence of the intervention. To assess immediate change following the enactment, communication was assessed prior to and following the enactment. The impact of the enactment also considered the type of enactment intervention used, positive, negative, or neutral, and whether or not the enactment produced the desired results in the couple's communication.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the literature that shows the relationship between relationship satisfaction and communication skills. This provided a foundation for the use of interventions that promote communication skills in couple therapy. As a result of these findings, a case was made that the use of enactment interventions within couple therapy is effective in assessing, changing interaction patterns within the therapy session, developing skills, solving problems, encouraging affective experiences, and producing insights within the couple about their relationship. At the conclusion of this chapter, research hypotheses are presented.

#### Communication and Relationship Satisfaction

There is a distinct relationship between communication and marital satisfaction that has been clarified over the last three decades (Christensen et al., 1998; Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1993; Raush et al., 1974). It has been observed that sociologists focused mainly on economic hardship, division of labor, and demographic information when studying relationship satisfaction (Vangelisti & Huston, 1994). This is a sharp contrast to the research done by clinical social scientists, family researchers, and communication scholars which has focused mainly on interpersonal behaviors and the manner in which couples work through differences (Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1993; Vangelisti & Huston, 1994). For example, communication researchers claim that it is not the lack of money that causes marital problems, but rather how a couple communicates and negotiates with each other about their economic difficulties (Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1993). The focus on the

communicative interaction within the couple has resulted in studies that examine the association between communication and relationship satisfaction.

Researchers in the area of communication and relationship satisfaction have theorized that each relationship is maintained by the functions served by that relationship (Burleson, Albrecht, & Sarason, 1994). Communication is a crucial aspect of fulfilling these functions. Researchers and clinicians have suggested that because communication skills contribute to the achievement of relationship functions, individual differences in communication skills play an important role in the maintenance of relationships (Burleson et al., 1994; Gottman, 1994b; Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1993; Satir, 1988). Therefore, communication is directly associated with whether a relationship is maintained or dissolved.

The literature also shows that distressed couples communicate differently from nondistressed couples (Burr, Day, & Bahr, 1989; Gottman, Coan, Carrere, & Swanson, 1998; Minuchin, 1974; Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1993; Satir, 1988). In troubled relationships communication tends to be more indirect, vague, and less honest. On the other hand, just the opposite has generally been found in untroubled, healthy relationships (Burr et al., 1989; Minuchin, 1974; Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1993; Satir, 1988). Without effective communication skills, couples may find it difficult to resolve noncommunication problems in their relationships (Baucom & Epstein, 1990).

Research suggests that healthy relationships are contingent upon people understanding one another's meaning, no matter which words are used to express that meaning. Additionally, the literature mentions communication as one of the greatest single factors affecting a person's relationship with others (Christensen et al., 1998; Holtzworth-Munroe & Jacobson, 1991; Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1993; Rauh et al., 1974; Satir, 1988; Watzlawick, Weakland, & Fish, 1974). Furthermore, several

studies have shown that negative communication behaviors are associated with distress in the relationship (Gottman, 1994b; Krokoff, 1991).

Gottman's Research on Marital Styles  
and the Positive to Negative Ratio

The work of Gottman and his colleagues explores the idea that there may be various styles of marriage that result in a happy, satisfying relationship. The different styles are important to understand. Equally important to understand are the key elements that determine the couple's marital style.

Gottman and his colleagues have done extensive research on marital satisfaction and longevity. Gottman (1994a, 1994b) found that there are two key elements that must be present for a marriage to be successful. First of all, Gottman considered the positive and negative interactions as they relate to positive communication and satisfaction in marriage. As he stated:

Our research data suggests that it is the *balance* between positive and negative emotional interactions in a marriage that determines its well being....We found that satisfied couples, no matter how their marriages stacked up against the ideal, were those who maintained a five-to-one ratio of positive to negative moments....What counted was the overall *balance* of positive to negative. (1994a, p.44)

If the couple is to have a happy marriage, the ratio of positive to negative emotional interactions is going to have to be maintained at a minimum of five positive strokes to every negative swipe. This ratio supports the need for positive communication to maintain marital satisfaction that has been theorized by others (Notarius & Markman, 1994; Satir, 1988).

The second key element for a successful marriage according to Gottman (1994a) is compatibility. This does not refer to their compatibility in socioeconomic class, ethnicity, interests, or the other general compatibility areas that family scientists have long considered so vital to a satisfying relationship. As Gottman puts it:

Paradoxically, successful couples are compatible - but not in the way traditionally suggested by marital therapy theory. As it turns out, the spouses within each different style are compatible fighters, they do agree on the way they will disagree, on how they will traverse the tough terrain they inevitably cross on their trek through marriage. (1994a, pp. 45-46)

Couples not only need the ratio of five positive to one negative interactions, but their marriage is more likely to be successful if they are compatible fighters.

Gottman found through his research that there are four processes of negativity that are extremely dangerous to any relationship. He refers to them as the "four horsemen of the apocalypse" (Gottman, 1994a, p. 46) due to their destructive nature. These four processes of negative communication are criticism, defensiveness, contempt, and stonewalling. Criticism and defensiveness are understandable to most. Contempt is a general lack of respect or a general disregard for a person. It is often displayed through nonverbal gestures such as rolling the eyes. Stonewalling is when one spouse removes him/herself emotionally or physically. This is often referred to as withdrawal. Every couple will use some of these tactics from time to time. However, couples must be cautious that these processes do not gradually begin to occupy a growing proportion of regular fights and disagreements (Gottman et al., 1998). A greater likelihood of marital dissatisfaction will arise if these processes are used too often (Gottman, 1994a). These four processes emphasize the destructive nature of negative communication.

The relationship between positive and negative communication and relationship satisfaction has been noted by other researchers (Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1993; Raush et al., 1974). There is ample research to show this relationship. Perhaps the most noted research team, Notarius and Markman, have extensive data to support this conclusions. Based on their research results, Notarius and Markman (1994) have developed a premarital education and therapy program that shows promise in promoting satisfaction and reducing the potential for divorce.

### Communication and Couple Therapy

Flowing from the literature showing the association between relationship satisfaction and communication, research has been done on the inclusion of assessments and interventions that address the communication patterns of couples seeking and within couple therapy. The foundations of the systemic approach to family therapy are based on the use of communication assessments and interventions. Bateson, Jackson, Haley, Bowen, Satir, and many others included communication assessment and intervention as one of the key components of family therapy (Gladding, 1998; Guttman, 1991; Nichols & Schwartz, 1991; Satir, 1988).

It has been established that both marital therapists and couples characterize communication difficulties as the most frequent and destructive problems in troubled relationships (Geiss & O'Leary, 1981). Furthermore, couples who share little information about their preferences, attitudes, perceptions, and emotions are less likely to feel intimate and less likely to resolve whatever conflicts they may have (Baucom & Epstein, 1990). Therefore, the inclusion of communication assessment is a key element in the early stages of couple therapy. Consequently, effective couple therapy will need to assess communication and gain a better understanding of how

the couple interacts (Bray & Jouriles, 1995; Gottman, 1994a, 1994b; Guerney et al., 1986), regardless of the therapy modality.

Previous literature reviews about the effectiveness of marital therapy have found that there are not significant differences in the outcomes of different schools of marital therapy (Bray & Jouriles, 1995; Gurman & Kniskern, 1981; Jacobson & Addis, 1993; Lambert & Bergin, 1994). It was concluded that the effective mechanisms for change must lie in some commonality across the various approaches. However, it was found that the more effective marital therapy approaches would include interventions during the session that address the communication patterns of the couple, verbal interactions, communication skills training, and conflict resolution (Bray & Jouriles, 1995).

Following the ideas of this research, couple and family therapy should, and often does, incorporate some form of communication skills training (Bray & Jouriles, 1995; Guerney et al., 1986) or attention to communication patterns and styles (Gottman, 1994b). This inclusion of the assessment of and training in communication skills is intended to improve communication within the relationship as a couple attends therapy. Interventions that increase the ratio of positive to negative communications will increase the degree of relationship satisfaction (Gottman, 1994b). These interventions can also help bring awareness to the couple about Gottman's (1994b) four processes of negativity. This intervention in communication will permit therapists and couples to focus on the process (how the couple discusses the problem), rather than content issues (what the couple discusses), that couples bring to the therapy session. One of the most effective ways to bring about this desired communication within the therapy session is through the use of enactments.

## The Use of Enactments in Couple Therapy

In couple and family therapy, an enactment refers to a procedure in therapy in which the couple is permitted to or instructed to interact with each other with little to no interruption from the therapist (Aponte & VanDeusen, 1981; Minuchin & Fishman, 1981). From this interaction, the therapist can assess communication techniques and can direct or coach the interaction by prolonging its length, by offering alternative interaction techniques, and by pointing out the difference between the content and process issues occurring in the interaction (Minuchin & Fishman, 1981). As previously mentioned, an enactment is a technique in therapy in which the members of the couple talk directly to each other and the therapist coaches interaction.

The use of enactments seems to originate within Minuchin's structural therapy modality (Minuchin, 1974). Minuchin described the family as a system in transition that interacts through the use of transactional patterns. These patterns help the family restructure as it moves through its developmental stages. As the family's circumstances change, the family adapts to maintain continuity and to promote the individual growth of its members. The transactional patterns establish the rules of how, when, and with whom to communicate, interact, and relate. Transactional patterns are the binding agent that maintains the system (Minuchin, 1974).

Understanding the concept of transactional patterns helps explain why Minuchin considered enactments as a key component in family therapy (Minuchin, 1974; Minuchin & Fishman, 1981). Because transactional patterns regulate family behavior, whether functional or dysfunctional, Minuchin considered it important to see these patterns first hand. As a couple or family engages in an enactment within



the therapy session, the usual rules that govern their common behavior take over, simulating how they would behave at home (Minuchin & Fishman, 1981). The use of an enactment might provide an improvement in the quantity and the quality of information provided to the therapist. The goal of an enactment is to increase the complexity of the family's transactions and to help the family create more competent transactions to create change in the system. Enactments can be used to facilitate all levels of therapy techniques, including building the therapeutic relationship, assessment, intervention, and termination (Minuchin & Fishman, 1981).

Enactments are common interventions in many family therapy approaches (Reid & Helmer, 1986). In structural family therapy, enactments serve as the foundation for many of the interventions (Aponte & VanDeusen, 1981; Minuchin & Fishman, 1981). Other modalities that include enactment style interventions include the relationship enhancement approach, behavioral marital therapy, and emotionally focused couple therapy (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Guerney et al., 1986; Jacobson & Margolin, 1979). Behavioral marital therapy uses the terms behavioral rehearsal and role play to refer to an enactment type intervention (Gottman & Leiblum, 1974; Jacobson & Margolin, 1979). The relationship enhancement approach uses the terms role play and problem solving training when referring to an enactment-type intervention in therapy (Guerney et al., 1986). All of these therapy approaches use an enactment type of intervention as a primary part of communication training, for all of the above reasons.

#### Uses for Enactments

The use of enactments in couple therapy may lead to a stronger therapeutic relationship and the generalization of behaviors outside of the therapy setting. The

use of enactments can also facilitate several different processes within the therapy session. Several of these therapeutic processes will be discussed in greater detail.

Gathering assessment information. One presumption when using an enactment is that couples will likely reveal their natural style of communicating if they are not coached. Minuchin and Fishman (1981) commented that when family members are permitted to interact, their family rules for communication will take over and the typical interactional processes will be manifest. The communication is more similar to their communication style that occurs outside the therapy session. The therapist can then gather information about their communication styles, skills, and techniques. The therapist can also gather process-oriented information that would otherwise not be revealed.

Changing communication patterns. After the couple's communication style, skills, and techniques have been assessed, most therapists find the next step to be the improvement of the communication patterns within the relationship (Gottman et al., 1998). Enactments provide the therapist with the opportunity to have the couple work on their communication.

Through the coaching aspect of an enactment, the therapist can interrupt the couple and do several things. For one thing, the therapist can help the couple identify the content (what is being said) and the process (how it is being said) of their interaction (Minuchin, 1974; Watzlawick et al., 1974). Another option the therapist has is to immediately change the pattern of communication by having the couple reenact their enactment but in a different way (Jacobson & Margolin, 1979). The therapist can also use an enactment to change the communication patterns by having the couple practice new communication skills (Baucom & Epstein, 1990). These are only a few ways that enactments can be used to change communication patterns.

Discussing underlying emotion. Enactments can also be used to have clients experience and communicate their emotions. Communicating emotions is often a difficult task for couples (Baucom & Epstein, 1990). If this type of communication is practiced within the therapy session with the therapist coaching the clients, affective expression may become more natural. As each person in the couple communicates his or her emotions, meanings and functions of behaviors can be identified. This can be an important element in identifying and changing the processes and patterns of the relationship (Christensen et al., 1998). The end result generally leads to better problem resolution skills (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988).

Developing problem-solving abilities. Problem-solving skills are a key component to many therapy approaches (Woolley, 1995). Enactments can be useful in solving problems by helping to identify the problem and emotions that may be related to the problem. Therapists can coach couples in an enactment to use skills that will facilitate problem resolution. Learning and practicing new communication skills by using enactments in therapy can help the couple change the process of their communication and problem-solving patterns (Jacobson & Margolin, 1979). Developing problem-solving abilities can be one way to produce new insight into the couple's relationship.

Producing new insights into the relationship. Through the use of enactments, therapists can help couples see their relationship differently. Whether it is through communicating affect or learning new problem-solving skills, the couple begins to perceive the relationship in a new light. Therapists can facilitate this insight by helping the clients identify the difference between the content and the process in their relationship (O'Hanlon & Hudson, 1995; Watzlawick et al., 1974). As previously mentioned, enactments can be useful in defining meaning and function of the problem. This in turn leads to greater insight into the relationship and the

maintenance of the problem and how communication is related to both the relationship and its maintenance.

Emphasizing partner and couple strengths. Enactments can be used to have couples identify their own strengths. Also, through the use of an enactment, therapists can notice the strengths of individual partners and the couple. The therapist can then take the opportunity to comment on those strengths to the individual or couple. Once a strength has been identified, the therapist can direct the couple to discuss that strength and the role that strength plays in their relationship (Gladding, 1998). Theoretically, focusing on the couple's strengths should give them hope for problem resolution and the confidence that they are capable of resolving their problem. This can help them believe that they are the experts on their problem and that they have the power to change their situation (Woolley, 1995).

#### Purpose of Enactments When Used as Interventions

The intended effect of an enactment can be varied. However, there are at least three specific changes identified in the literature for which enactments can be used (Woolley & Wampler, 1995). These three changes relate directly to the research done by Gottman and colleagues (1979, 1989, 1993, 1994a, 1994b, 1998) in regard to the maintenance of a five positive to one negative interaction ratio. Gottman (1994b) also noted that as couples begin doing exercises like enactments, it is likely that the problems and negativity between the couple will increase. However, this is part of developing repair mechanisms and these mechanisms must gradually develop over time.

The first method by which enactments can be used to increase the ratio of positive to negative interactions is through discussing underlying emotions. As a

couple expresses their emotions, they share an experience that can facilitate greater understanding of the other partner. When emotions are shared, the meaning of the particular situation can be investigated. This facilitation will permit openness in the relationship, which in turn may lead to greater empathy between the partners. As empathy increases, it is also likely that positive interactions will increase. If facilitation is not achieved, withdrawal may be a likely result.

The next method by which enactments serve to promote greater positive interactions is through increasing the likelihood of successful problem resolution. Couples tend to feel better about their relationship and themselves when they are able to successfully resolve problems. This greater sense of health in the relationship can lead to an increase in the positive interactions between the partners and a decrease in the episodes of conflict that remain unresolved (Gottman et al., 1998).

The third way that enactments can facilitate a change in a couple's positive to negative interaction ratio is by clarifying the communication process. This can be accomplished through several intervention techniques. The most obvious of these is directly pointing out the process of communication during an enactment. By uncovering how messages are sent and the implied meanings in the messages, couples can send congruent messages which create a sense of trust in the relationship (Satir, 1988). The use of communication skills can also lead to a change in the positive to negative interaction patterns (Jacobson & Margolin, 1979). The use of reflective listening and "I" statements may lead to an increased validation of the other partner's thoughts and feelings (Baucom & Epstein, 1990), thereby increasing the understanding and empathy within the relationship. Another method that can be used to change the communication process is to structure the enactment so that positive statements are encouraged and negative statements are discouraged (Woolley, 1995; Woolley & Wampler, 1995). These methods of clarifying the

communication process result in more instances of validation between the partners and a decrease in the amount of invalidation.

These three uses of enactments are focused on changing couple interactions by increasing the positive to negative interaction ratio in a relationship. It should be noted that these three uses and their specific focus on the positive to negative interaction ratio delineate only a few of the many uses of enactments in couples therapy.

### Enactment Interventions

When enactments are used as interventions in couple therapy, it is generally done to facilitate one of the aforementioned therapeutic processes. Enactments can be used as specific interventions to create a desired or intended outcome. The intention of enactment interventions generally falls within one of three categories. These categories focus on the type of communication the therapist intends for the couple to display during the enactment. The first category is the use of an enactment intervention to produce positive communication between the couple. One example of this may be when a therapist instructs the partners to continue to use positive statements and soft tones. In the second category, the therapist desires to see how the couple displays negative communication. This may be accomplished by the therapist giving the couple a directive to reenact their last heated argument (Minuchin, 1974). In the third category, the therapist takes more of a neutral stance. This is done through such interventions as simply structuring the couple by having them turn and face each other and talk directly to each other instead of to the therapist.

Some of the most recent reviews of therapy outcome literature point out that there were not significant differences in the outcomes of different schools of marital

therapy (Bray & Jouriles, 1995). The research concluded that the effective mechanisms for change must lie in some commonality across the various approaches. The research also pointed out that these commonalities likely include interventions that address the communication patterns of the couple, verbal interactions in the session, communication skills training, and conflict resolution (Bray & Jouriles, 1995). The use of enactments appears to be one such commonality. However, there is to date no published research on the use of enactments in couple therapy.

### Hypotheses

As previously presented, the literature on enactments has been theoretical. No research has been conducted on the outcome results of using enactments in therapy. The goal of enactment use is to alter the transactional patterns in order to create more competent patterns of communicating, interacting, and relating. However, there is a lack of research that has looked specifically at this goal and if enactments actually do create change. The intention of this research was to find out if enactments do lead to change in communication patterns.

There are three specific hypotheses for this study:

1. There will be an increase in the problem resolution, facilitation, and validation communication patterns and a decrease in the use of conflict, invalidation, and withdrawal communication patterns of a couple in therapy when comparing the pre- and post-positive enactment communication behaviors for both the husbands and wives.
2. There will be an increase in the conflict, invalidation, and withdrawal communication patterns and a decrease in the problem resolution, facilitation, and validation communication patterns of a couple in therapy when comparing the pre-

and post-negative enactment communication behaviors for both the husbands and wives

3. There will be no change in the communication patterns of a couple in therapy when comparing the 10 minutes prior to the use of a neutral enactment intervention to the 10 minutes directly after the use of such an enactment.



### CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

The methodology chapter addresses the design, sampling, measurement, and research procedures that were used in this study. This information will enable the reader to more clearly understand the study.

#### Design

This study examined the relationship between the use of positive, negative, and neutral enactments in couple therapy, which are the independent variables, and the use of problem solving, validation, facilitation, conflict, invalidation, and withdrawal communication behaviors by couples attending therapy, which are the dependent variables. This is a correlational design (Miller, 1986).

#### Sample

Videotapes of 37 enactments during couple therapy were used for the research in this study. Additional data regarding the 37 couples included on these tapes were gathered from client intake forms and files. A summary of this information can be found in Table 1. In general, the participants were young, Caucasian, and most were Mormon. In addition, most were also in their first year of marriage (92% for both husbands and wives).

Table 1

Sample Description of Couples Participating in Enactment Study (n = 37)

Variable	<u>n</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>	Min.	Max.
Age					
Husband	37	29.16	6.74	20	49
Wife	37	26.84	5.91	19	41
Years married	37	4.05	2.94	1	11
	<u>n</u>	<u>Percentage</u>			
Religious affiliation of husband					
Mormon	28	75.7			
Protestant	3	8.1			
Catholic	1	2.7			
None	5	13.5			
Religious affiliation of wife					
Mormon	29	78.4			
Protestant	3	8.1			
Catholic	1	2.7			
None	4	10.8			

The videotapes were obtained through the Utah State University Marriage and Family Therapy Clinic in Logan, Utah. The university has a master's-level program in Marriage and Family Therapy which is accredited by the Commission on

Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. The clients for the clinic are referred through newspaper, radio, and other advertisements and include university students, as well as community members. The therapists that conducted the therapy in the enactment video segments were all in their second year of the master's program and were considered experienced students. More information about the therapists can be found in Table 2.

Table 2

Information Regarding Therapists Participating in Study

Variable	<u>n</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>	Min.	Max.
Age of therapist	11	29.95	6.63	22	46
	<u>n</u>	<u>Percentage</u>			
Gender of therapists					
Female	6	54.5			
Male	5	45.5			
Number of enactments by therapist gender					
Female	16	43.3			
Male	21	56.7			

The Marriage and Family Therapy Clinic deals with a number of presenting problems, including families, couples, or individuals dealing with conflict, communication problems, general unhappiness, life transition problems, and adjusting to and managing difficulties with chronic illness, mental illness, attention deficit disorder, drug/alcohol abuse, eating disorders, and domestic violence. Fees are determined on a sliding fee scale based on income and family size. The various presenting problems that were encountered in this study can be found in Table 3.

Table 3

Presenting Problems Contained in Enactment Video Segments

Presenting Problem	<u>n</u>	Percentage
Communication	13	35.1
Conflict	10	27.0
Depression	5	13.5
Divorce decision	4	10.8
Sexual problems	2	5.4
Parenting issues	1	2.7
Extended family problems	1	2.7
<u>Remarriage issues</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2.7</u>
Total	37	100.0

In order for the tapes to be used in the study, several criteria had to be met. The criteria for use include both partners of the couple being present, an enactment must occur, and there must be 10 minutes prior to the enactment and 10 minutes after the enactment for coding purposes. The tapes were also required to have acceptable video and audio quality.

### Measures

The measures used to assess communication and the enactments were both coding systems. The specific descriptions follow.

#### The Marital Interaction Coding System-Global

The Marital Interaction Coding System-Global (MICS-G) is a coding system that provides researchers with a method by which they can describe and analyze a couple's communication patterns and behaviors (Weiss & Tolman, 1990). The MICS-G was developed to serve as a vehicle for answering questions about the nature of distressed and nondistressed couple interactions. The design of the MICS-G is intended to summarize a couple's interactions into six different categories. These categories include: conflict, problem solving, validation, invalidation, facilitation, and withdrawal. Appendix A contains the subcategories that make up these variables.

Each individual in the couple was rated on each of these six categories. The variables were scored from zero to five, zero being a total absence of the behavior and a five indicating that the behavior was apparent throughout the majority of the time

or was quite intense. Individuals were not scored solely according to the number of times a behavior occurred, but rather how the behavior was represented. The degree of emphasis and intensity of the displayed behavior was considered in the scoring.

The reliability and validity of the MICS-G has been established. The reliability for this measure was established through measuring the level of observer agreement. Weiss and Tolman (1990) found that their interobserver reliability was moderate to high. Coders' percentage of agreement ranged from 78% to 93% on the various categories, showing high levels of agreement. Training of raters for only 10 hours could have limited the agreement of their raters. For this reason, the coders for the present study were trained for 10 weeks and averaged 40 hours of instruction and practice.

Several strategies were used to establish the validity of this measure (Weiss & Tolman, 1990). Weiss and Tolman (1990) reported that for convergent validity, mean correlations between the ratings of the MICS-G and marital adjustment were  $\bar{r} = .42$  ( $p < .01$ ) for husbands and  $\bar{r} = .48$  ( $p < .01$ ) for wives. The correlations were all in the expected direction and statistically significant, with the exception of Wife Problem Solving, which accounted for 16% to 36% of the variance. Percent agreement showed that the raters who had been only trained for 10 hours could achieve classification rates that were much higher than chance, with an overall accuracy of 80% for both husbands and wives (Weiss & Tolman, 1990).

### Enactment Coding

Each videotape contains a 10-minute section of video that occurred directly before the start of an enactment. That section is followed by the enactment. The last section on the tape is another video clip of the 10 minutes directly following the enactment. The 10-minute sections, pre- and post-enactment, were coded using the MICS-G. The enactments were coded according to their enactment type, either positive, negative, or neutral.

Due to the absence of research on enactments in couple therapy, no system exists for the coding of the enactment type. The enactments were coded by an upper division undergraduate student in coordination with the author's major professor. Each enactment section of the video tape was viewed by the coder and given a positive, negative, or neutral designation. This was done through paying particular attention to the exact instructions given by the therapist that led up to and resulted in an enactment. These instructions showed how the therapist intended to use the enactment as an intervention, whether positive, negative, or neutral. Appendix B provides the complete enactment coding instructions.

The identification of an enactment as positive, negative, or neutral has not been previously attempted. However, Woolley (1995) identified nine methods to use within enactments to promote enactment success. These nine methods may give insight into which method may produce a positive, negative, or neutral enactment. The nine methods are structuring, giving directives, focusing on affect, giving support, producing insight into the process of the communication, teaching skills,

encouraging positive statements, confronting negative statements, and maintaining neutral alignment (Woolley, 1995). The frequency for the different types of enactments in this study can be found in Table 4.

The nine methods to successful enactments provide some guidelines to define which enactments are positive, negative, or neutral. Some of the nine clearly belong to the positive enactment category (giving support, teaching skills, and encouraging positive statements). The structuring method simply refers to setting up the enactment by having the couple turn their chairs and face each other and is generally considered a neutral enactment on its own. Maintaining neutral alignment is also neutral by nature and often occurs when couples spontaneously begin an enactment. The other four methods, giving directives, focusing on affect, producing insight into

Table 4

Enactment Methods Used in the Enactment Video Segments

Enactment Method	<u>n</u>	Percentage
Insight into process	17	45.9
Structuring	15	40.5
Teaching	3	8.1
Directive	1	2.7
Positive statement	1	2.7
Total	37	100.0



the process of the communication, and confronting negative statements, are designed to produce positive, negative, or neutral enactments according to the therapist's intent to assess or intervene. For example, a directive could be given to reenact an argument in order for the therapist to be able to assess the couple's negative communication behaviors (Minuchin, 1974). However, a directive could also be given to the couple to reenact an argument using newly learned problem-solving skills (Baucom & Epstein, 1990), which would be considered a positive enactment. For this reason, the enactments were coded according to specific verbal cues used by the therapist. An enactment was coded as positive when the therapist said statements such as "help your partner better understand what you are saying" or "discuss the situation using the problem solving skills we have been learning" or other similar statements. Cues that identified positive enactments include any instruction or comment by the therapist that was intended to increase communication interactions involving problem solving, facilitation, and validation.

An enactment was coded in the negative category when the therapist requested the couple to reenact an argument without altering it or for the couple to use negative statements. This is conceptualized as occurring when the therapist directed one partner to confront or express negative emotion towards the other partner. Negative enactment cues occurred when the therapist instructed the couple to use communication behaviors that would increase conflict, invalidation, and withdrawal. These were the least common type of enactment.

When the therapist used statements like "turn your chairs so you are facing

each other and discuss your homework assignment" or other neutral statements, the enactment was coded as neutral. Neutral enactments lacked specific cues for particular communication change and were more general in purpose.

Of the 37 enactments in this study, 20 were positive (54.1%), 2 were negative (5.4%), and 15 were neutral (40.5%). It is interesting to note that of the nine enactment methods, only five were used by the therapists in this study. Those not used in this study include focusing on affect, giving support, confronting negative statements, and maintaining neutral alignment. The enactment methods utilized in this study can be found in Table 4. The methods used followed the valence data in that all the structuring enactments were coded as neutral, while the teaching and using positive statements, and 16 of the 17 insight into process of communication enactments were also coded as positive. The two negative enactments took place once when a directive was given and another time when the insight into the process of communication method was employed.

Enactment type, positive, negative, or neutral, was coded by one person. Because enactment types were easily recognizable, all the codes were clear and straightforward, so no additional coders were used. Enactment coding information can be found in Appendix B.

### Procedure

The tapes containing the enactments were obtained from the Marriage and Family Therapy Clinic at Utah State University. Couples made appointments for

therapy and were assigned a therapist. Information regarding the therapists can be found in Table 2. In the first session, the couple read and signed an informed consent agreement, which outlined their rights as clients and as participants in research. Issues of confidentiality were also addressed in the informed consent agreement, including that the couple could terminate their participation at any time. The couples gave consent to be videotaped for research purposes.

The MICS-G (Weiss & Tolman, 1990) was used to train coders to reliably code each couple's communication. Five upper-division undergraduate students majoring in Family and Human Development and Psychology at Utah State were recruited to work as coders for this project. These coders all had future interests to do marital research or therapy. Four of the five coders were female.

Coders were trained according to Weiss and Tolman's (1990) instruction booklet. Training was done with a series of videotapes not included in the research project and continued approximately 10 weeks until all of the coders had an overall interrater Cohen's kappa reliability of .80 or higher. Every 3 weeks there was a check for coder reliability and a 6-week check for coder drift. After the 10 weeks of training, coders began coding tapes for the current study. The coders were blind to the purpose of the study. Coders were trained to monitor each couple's conversation content and affect. Relative to affect, coders were specifically trained to notice eye movement, tone of voice, and body cues in each of the six communication areas of the MICS-G. All of the coders were instructed about the confidentiality issues regarding the tapes.

Cohen's kappa statistic was used to determine interobserver agreement. It is one of the most conservative and appropriate ways to look at interobserver agreement when observing interactions. This is due to several advantages that the kappa statistic has over other interobserver agreement statistics, such as the most commonly used percent agreement statistic. One advantage is that kappa documents point-by-point agreement. Perhaps the most important advantage is that Cohen's kappa is designed to correct for chance agreement, which percent agreement cannot do (Bakeman & Gottman, 1979). When kappa is used, once agreement at more detailed levels is established, it is safe to assume that there is agreement at levels that are of less detail (Bakeman & Gottman, 1979). Fleiss (1981) categorized kappas of .40-.60 as fair, .60-.75 as good, and over .75 as excellent. These advantages of the kappa statistic make it the most stringent and acceptable interobserver agreement statistic (Bakeman & Gottman, 1979). For this study, the kappa scores for all six types of communication for both genders ranged from .69 to .71 for the coding of the MICS-G scores.

The videotapes to be coded were kept in the front office of the Family Life Center and were made available only to the trained coders. The secretary had a list of those coders and checked the videos out to them so that the tapes could be taken to an observation room and coded. The office is locked when the secretary is not there. After the tapes were coded, they were kept in a locked storage room in the basement of the Family Life Center or were erased.

## CHAPTER IV

## RESULTS

This thesis focused on the use of enactments within couple therapy sessions and the immediate effects of the interventions on specific communication behaviors. Enactments were divided into three categories: positive, negative, or neutral. These categories were determined according to the instructions given by the therapist to the clients at the time of the enactment.

The first hypothesis stated that there would be an increase in the problem resolution, facilitation, and validation communication patterns and a decrease in the use of conflict, invalidation, and withdrawal communication patterns of a couple in therapy when comparing the 10 minutes prior to the use of a positive enactment intervention to the 10 minutes directly after the use of such an enactment. The coding of the couples' communication resulted in interval-level dependent variables due to the numeric structure of the MICS-G. For this hypothesis, paired  $t$  tests were used to compare the communication prior to the enactment with communication after the enactment for husbands and wives separately. This was the most appropriate statistical test for the data because of the inherent dependence of the pre/post test design, matching the primary assumption of dependent pairs of the paired  $t$  test. This test also assumes a normal distribution. This sample is not a random sample and does not meet the criteria for normal distribution. However, Glass and Hopkins (1984) stated that of all the assumptions for  $t$  tests, violation of the assumption of normality has almost no practical consequences. The final

assumption is homogeneity of variance. Since the sample sizes are equal for all the pairings, any difference in variance may not be as critical. However, upon comparison of standard deviations, this assumption was likely frequently violated. Table 5 lists the means, standard deviations, *t*-values, and effect sizes for the husbands' pre- and post-enactment scores. The statistical analysis revealed that none of the husbands' pre/post scores differed significantly, which shows a lack of support for this hypothesis.

Effect sizes were calculated for all communication behavior comparisons. According to Weinfurt (1995, p. 274), the effect size is "the magnitude of an independent variables effect, usually expressed as a proportion of explained variance in the dependent variables." In this case, the effect size was calculated by subtracting the mean of the pre-enactment score from the mean of the post-enactment score and dividing by the pooled standard deviation of the two scores (Durlak, 1995). The scores were then recorded in absolute values. The transformation into effect sizes reflects the relative magnitude of effect in a common term, standard deviations, allowing for meaningful comparisons from one variable to the next. In this study, an effect size of 1.0 would mean that the post-enactment score changed 1 standard deviation higher or lower than the pre-enactment score. Durlak (1995) reported that "effect sizes of around 0.20 have a small magnitude of effect, those around 0.50 have a medium magnitude of effect, and those around 0.80 have a high magnitude of effect" (p. 328). However, in some areas of research, mean effects of 0.50 may be considered large.

Table 5

Means, Standard Deviations, t-Values, and Effect Sizes for Husbands'Pre- and Post-Positive Enactment Scores

n=20	<u>Pre- Enactment</u>		<u>Post- Enactment</u>		<u>t</u>	<u>ES</u>
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>		
Conflict	0.95	1.05	1.00	1.12	-0.16	0.05
Problem solving	1.10	0.64	1.30	0.92	-0.89	0.26
Validation	1.25	1.07	1.35	1.14	-0.33	0.09
Invalidation	0.80	0.77	1.15	1.18	-1.44	0.36
Facilitation	0.90	0.64	1.20	0.83	-1.37	0.41
Withdrawal	0.55	0.89	0.65	0.67	-0.57	0.13

Note. ES reported in absolute values.

\* $p < .05$

Table 6 lists the means, standard deviations,  $t$ -values, and effect sizes for the wives' pre- and post-enactment scores. The information from the analysis showed that only one of the  $t$ -values, comparing the pre- and post- enactment score of wives' facilitation communication behavior, was statistically significant at the .05 level. However, this finding should be interpreted cautiously due to the fact that multiple univariate comparisons may have inflated the alpha level, thereby increasing the risk of a Type 1 error. None of the other values were statistically significant. The data do not support Hypothesis One.

Table 6

Means, Standard Deviations, t-Values, and Effect Sizes for Wives'

Pre- and Post-Positive Enactment Scores

n=20	<u>Pre- Enactment</u>		<u>Post- Enactment</u>		t	ES
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>		
Conflict	1.20	1.11	1.40	1.31	-0.64	0.17
Problem solving	1.10	0.64	1.25	1.07	-0.68	0.17
Validation	1.10	0.64	1.10	0.97	0.00	0.00
Invalidation	0.95	1.05	1.25	1.25	-1.10	0.26
Facilitation	0.70	0.66	1.20	0.95	-2.36*	0.62
Withdrawal	0.75	0.79	0.55	0.61	1.29	0.29

Note. ES reported in absolute values.

\* $p < .05$

The second hypothesis stated that there would be an increase in the conflict, invalidation, and withdrawal communication patterns and a decrease in the problem resolution, facilitation, and validation communication patterns of a couple in therapy when comparing the 10 minutes prior to the use of a negative enactment intervention to the 10 minutes directly after the use of such an enactment. The coding of the couples' communication resulted in interval-level dependent variables due to the numeric structure of the MICS-G. For the second hypothesis, statistical analysis was not calculable. This was due to the fact that only two cases of negative enactments



were found in the sample. This was not enough to meet any of the assumptions of the paired  $t$  test. Appendix C provides the raw data, the means, standard deviations, and effect sizes for the husbands' and wives' pre- and post-enactment scores.

The third hypothesis stated that there would not be a change in the communication patterns of a couple in therapy when comparing the 10 minutes prior to the use of a neutral enactment intervention to the 10 minutes directly after the use of such an enactment. The findings from the third hypothesis are similar to the findings of the first hypothesis. The coding of the couples' communication resulted in interval-level dependent variables due to the numeric structure of the MICS-G. Paired  $t$  tests were used because they were found to be the most appropriate statistical test for the data collected. This was due to the necessary assumption of dependence of pairs of the pre/posttest design. Once again, the  $t$  test assumes a normal distribution. This sample, as with Hypothesis One, is not a random sample and does not meet the criteria for normal distribution. However, as previously mentioned, Glass and Hopkins (1984) state that of all the assumptions for  $t$  tests, violation of the assumption of normality has almost no practical consequences. The final assumption of the paired  $t$  test is homogeneity of variance. When comparing standard deviations, this assumption was likely frequently violated, even with sample sizes equal for all pairings.

The husbands' scores for Problem Solving and Validation did fall into the statistically significant .05 level, which does not support this null hypothesis. However, these finding should be taken with caution due to the fact that multiple

univariate comparisons may have inflated the alpha level, thereby increasing the risk of Type 1 errors. The effect scores, however, show that there were fairly high levels of explained variance. Table 7 provides the means, standard deviations, *t*-values, and effect sizes for the husbands' pre- and post-neutral enactment scores.

Table 8 provides the means, standard deviations, *t*-values, and effect sizes for the wives' pre- and post-neutral enactment scores. The wives' score for facilitation did fall into the statistically significant .05 level, which supports the rejection of the null hypothesis. However, this finding should also be taken with caution because

Table 7

Means, Standard Deviations, t-Values, and Effect Sizes for Husbands'

Pre- and Post-Neutral Enactment Scores

<i>n</i> =17	<u>Pre- Enactment</u>		<u>Post- Enactment</u>		<i>t</i>	<i>ES</i>
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>		
Conflict	1.00	1.25	1.00	1.13	0.00	0.00
Problem solving	0.80	0.56	1.20	0.68	-2.10*	0.65
Validation	0.53	0.64	0.93	0.70	-2.45*	0.60
Invalidation	0.67	1.29	0.60	0.91	0.22	0.06
Facilitation	1.07	0.46	1.07	0.70	0.00	0.00
Withdrawal	0.40	0.63	0.27	0.80	1.00	0.18

Note. *ES* reported in absolute values.

\**p* < or = .05

Table 8

Means, Standard Deviations, t-Values, and Effect Sizes for Wives'

Pre- and Post-Neutral Enactment Scores

<u>n</u> =17	<u>Pre- Enactment</u>		<u>Post- Enactment</u>		<u>t</u>	<u>ES</u>
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>		
Conflict	0.87	1.19	1.00	0.87	-0.40	0.13
Problem solving	1.20	0.68	1.07	0.59	1.00	0.20
Validation	0.67	0.62	0.73	0.70	-0.29	0.09
Invalidation	0.53	1.30	0.53	0.74	0.00	0.00
Facilitation	0.80	0.41	1.20	0.56	-2.45*	0.82
Withdrawal	0.13	0.35	0.20	0.78	-0.43	0.12

Note. ES reported in absolute values.

\* $p < .05$

multiple univariate comparisons may have inflated the alpha level, thereby increasing the risk of a Type 1 error.

The statistical data show mixed results for Hypothesis Three. This is evident from the lack of statistical significance found in most of the tests performed on the neutral enactment data, with the exception of the three previously mentioned cases. Of all the hypotheses, the third hypothesis received the greatest number of scores where  $p < \text{or} = .05$ . These three scores must be noted and considered when using neutral enactments.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between marital therapy enactments and couple communication. It is important to remember that the communication scores, ranging from 0.0 to 5.0, reflect not only the frequency of the behavior, but also the intensity of the behavior. A score of 1.0 reflects a minor impact, where a score of 5.0 would seriously impact the relationship.

The first hypothesis, that positive communication behaviors would increase and negative communication behaviors decrease when a positive enactment was used, was for the most part not supported. The one exception, as noted in Table 6, was the paired  $t$  test comparing wives' pre-enactment facilitation communication behavior to the wives' post-enactment facilitation, which was found to be statistically significant. While this was expected, given the number of paired  $t$  tests conducted, there is a possibility that it was significant just by chance. However, it should be noted that the relationship was in the expected direction with more facilitation behaviors occurring after the positive enactment. Also, the effect size for the wives' facilitation score was 0.62, which is between the moderate and high magnitude level.

It was interesting to notice the trend that appeared from the data from the positive enactment segments. All of the communication behavior categories increased, even if it was only a slight increase. This created some questions about the nature of using positive enactments in couple therapy. It is possible that this hypothesis was not supported because of the nature of positive enactments. Much

research has shown that certain types of communication are associated with the degree of distress within the relationship (Burr, Day, & Bahr, 1989; Minuchin, 1974; Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1993; Satir, 1988). In distressed couples, which is characteristic of couples that seek marital therapy, it is more common to find communication that is indirect and vague. Perhaps the slight increase in frequency and intensity of all types of communication for the husbands, and in all types of communication except withdrawal for the wives, could be connected to the change in the communication style. Positive enactments, especially with the coaching of the therapist, would require the couple to utilize communication techniques that are more characteristic of nondistressed couples, such as using more problem-solving skills, validating each others views, facilitating more cooperation, being more direct, understanding what the partner is trying to say before responding, and looking at each other when talking (Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1993; Raush et al., 1974; Satir, 1988; Watzlawick et al., 1974). This positive communication could lead to the goal of most marital therapists, which would be generalization outside of the therapy room of clear, direct communication habits (Gladding, 1998). As many researchers have pointed out, this could increase the relationship satisfaction level for the couple (Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1993) and may also increase the ratio of positive to negative interactions (Gottman, 1994a, 1994b; Gottman et al., 1998).

The second hypothesis focused on the use of negative enactments in couple therapy and their association with negative communication behaviors before and after the enactment. There were only two negative enactments in the study, both of

which were conducted by female therapists. This was not enough to perform any type of statistical analysis. Even when looking for trends in the descriptive data, there was not an adequate amount of information to notice any trends with the use of negative enactments. However, with the means and standard deviations of the pre- and post-scores, effect sizes were calculated (see Appendix C). With these two cases, 6 of the 12 effect scores were over 1.0, meaning that there is a high magnitude of effect. These effect sizes might indicate that for these two cases the changes reported are likely due to real change and not chance occurrence. Caution must be used when considering these findings. With only two cases, means, standard deviations, and effect sizes have less meaning and value.

The scarcity of negative enactments is not surprising considering the current trends in marital therapy. The literature that discussed the use of negative enactments is between 15 and 25 years old and was mainly used by the structural marital and family therapists (Minuchin, 1974; Minuchin & Fishman, 1981). The structural marital and family therapy modality is still used currently, but other modalities seem to be more prevalent in the present therapy arena. Solution-focused and narrative modalities are some of the latest popular therapy trends (Gladding, 1998). These modalities focus on solutions to problems through various interventions, such as finding exceptions to problems, to help clients reach their goals. The use of negative enactments would not fit in with the therapeutic techniques employed by these modalities.

The third hypothesis stated that there would not be a change in the

communication patterns of a couple in therapy when comparing the 10 minutes prior to the use of a neutral enactment intervention to the 10 minutes directly after the use of such an enactment. Results were mixed regarding this hypothesis. The exceptions were the problem-solving and validation behaviors for the husbands (see Table 7). For the wives' scores, facilitation behaviors were found to be statistically significant (see Table 8). However, the remaining nine  $t$  tests showed that there were no differences in the values, which supports the null hypothesis.

The mixed results must be interpreted cautiously. The three statistically significant findings could result by chance because of the multiple univariate analyses which were conducted. Eight of the 12  $t$  tests do show that there were slight changes in the means between the pre- and post-enactment scores. These slight changes can in some cases turn out to be clinically significant (Jacobson & Margolin, 1979), when considering that the scores are measuring frequency and intensity, even if not found statistically significant. The significance of the scores is supported by the effect sizes. The husbands' problem-solving effect size was 0.65 and validation effect size was 0.60, both of which measured between moderate to high in magnitude. The wives' effect size for facilitation was 0.82, measuring high in magnitude. These effect sizes provide evidence that change in these three variables is likely due to real change and not chance occurrence due to multiple univariate statistics, which weakens the support for this hypothesis.

It was interesting to note that when using neutral enactments there were greater differences in the means than with the positive enactments. Perhaps this

hypothesis shares some commonalities with Hypothesis One, where the intrinsic qualities of the positive enactment increased communication across the majority of the positive and negative communication behaviors. The same scenario may be unfolding with the neutral enactments. The couple in the enactment, by nature of facing each other to talk, is beginning to practice effective communication skills and some change then should be expected (Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1993; Satir, 1988; Watzlawick et al., 1974).

Another reason that some types of communication increase after an enactment may be due to the basic goal of enactments. Minuchin (1974) proposed that the purpose of an enactment is to increase the complexity of the couple's transactions and to help them to create more competent transactions. This hypothesis of no pre/post difference rejects the notion of change being an expected outcome of an enactment. However, in a therapeutic setting, change is generally the main goal of the clients and therapist. Furthermore, when altering a couple's communication techniques by introducing communication behaviors characteristic of nondistressed couples, immediate change, whether temporary or small, is likely.

All three hypotheses were probably influenced to some degree by social desirability (Salminen, 1988). The consequences of social desirability are usually experienced when participants in research respond in a manner that they believe will help them bring about the expected results of the research project as they understand it. It could be that participants in this research changed their communication simply because they were trying to respond as they believed the therapist wanted them to, or



because they were being monitored and coached by the therapist. A similar phenomenon may occur in the therapeutic setting when the client wants to please the therapist to maintain the therapeutic relationship or to create an alliance with the therapist (Gladding, 1998; Nichols & Schwartz, 1998). The Hawthorne effect (Diaper, 1990) occurs when the level of production increases due to the person being monitored. Within enactments, it is expected that through therapists' monitoring and coaching, couples will use and develop different transactional patterns that will increase their communication skills. Both social desirability and the Hawthorne effect could explain the overall slight increase across the majority of the communication behaviors.

### Implications for Therapy

The statistical levels of significance were not enough to support the first two hypotheses presented in this research that specific change would occur after a certain type of enactment. The third hypothesis of no difference in the communication behaviors from before and after a neutral enactment had mixed results. However, information useful to marital therapists was gathered from this research. When looking at the trends in the data, slight increases across most positive and negative communication behaviors did occur after enactments in the positive and neutral enactment segments.

One important observation for therapists is the fact that wives' facilitation scores were found to be statistically significant in both the positive and neutral

enactment categories. The reason this is important is due to a possible increase in the positive-to-negative interaction ratio (Gottman, 1994a). This can be done through using an enactment to facilitate the sharing of emotions. As a couple expresses their emotions, they share an experience that can facilitate a sense of greater understanding of the other partner. When emotions are shared, the meaning of the particular situation can be investigated. This facilitation will permit openness in the relationship, which in turn may lead to greater empathy between the partners. As empathy increases, it is also likely that positive couple interactions will increase. As shown by the results of this study, either a positive or a neutral enactment could be used to increase facilitation communication behaviors for wives in couple therapy.

Another reason a therapist may want to use enactments is to assess how a couple communicates. As seen in this study, there tended to be slight changes in communication behavior after a positive or neutral enactment. When using an enactment in therapy, the couple is more likely to display the type of communication behaviors that they would normally use when not in the therapy room (Minuchin, 1974). Through assessing how the couple communicates during the enactment as compared to before and after the enactment period, a therapist may be able to see if there is a change in the couple's general communication behaviors with each other and with the therapist. If an individual's communication characteristics dramatically change when the client is talking directly to the therapist, as compared to when the couple was in the enactment, the therapist can ascertain that the client may be responding as she or he believes is socially desirable. More importantly, the therapist

can gain a better understanding of the couple's system and can begin to plan interventions that may be appropriate to the needed changes.

Another point worth mentioning are the changes that occurred in wives' facilitation scores. In both the positive and neutral enactments, changes in the wives' scores for facilitation were statistically significant. This could be due to several factors. The fact that wives' facilitation scores increased supports common stereotypes for females exhibiting more cooperative behaviors in relationships (Burr et al., 1989). Also, seeing that the large majority of females in this study were Mormon, facilitation-type communication behaviors may be related to their conservative beliefs and their tendency to believe in preservation of marriage through cooperation and agreement (Ludlow, 1992). This finding that wives increased their facilitation communication behaviors may deserve further research.

There is another important characteristic of enactments that may be useful to therapists. An important part of communication is feeling safe to say what one wants to say. When the therapist sets up an enactment with a couple, the couple knows that the therapist is there to coach and intervene if necessary. This establishes a safe environment for communication. The enactment also gives each person in the relationship permission to communicate. This may be the only place one or both of the partners feels safe and has permission to talk at the same time. This could be why slight increases in communication behaviors were experienced across the different  $t$  tests.

### Limitations

The major limitation of this study involves the sample. The sample was too small and too homogeneous to produce the desired amount of information. If there had been equal amounts of positive, negative, and neutral enactments, there would have only been about 12 cases in each category. This would have been an improvement, but would have still lacked the strength of a larger sample. A larger random sample may have allowed statistical testing of the negative enactment category and permitted the sample to better represent the population of couples who experience enactments in marital therapy.

Another weakness is the homogeneity of the sample. All of the participants, both clients and therapists, were Caucasian. Over 77% of the sample were Mormon. Most of the couples had been married 3 years or less. More than 91% of the couples were still in their first marriage and were less than 30 years old. This sample is generally representative of the clients that attend the Utah State University Marriage and Family Therapy Clinic, which provided the participants for this study. The homogeneity of the sample makes generalizing the results to the population of marital therapy clients impossible.

Another critical limitation of the study is the small number of negative enactments encountered. With only two cases, the second hypothesis could not be tested. Because of the lack of research on enactments, there is no information about the frequency of the use of negative enactments. It is perhaps the case that the current trends in marital therapy focus on modalities of therapy that would not

incorporate the use of negative enactments at all.

The therapists who conducted the sessions containing the enactments could also pose some limitations. All eleven therapists used in the study were enrolled in a graduate training program. This limits the study because of the lack of experience on the part of the therapists. Another limitation was that the therapists had limited training specific to the use of enactments in couple therapy. These limitations restrict the generalizability of this study because seasoned, experienced therapists and therapists specifically trained in the use of enactments were not included.

Another possible limitation could involve the coding system of the MICS-G. It might not have picked up the changes that were occurring after the enactments. There may have been other communication behaviors present that did not fit into the structure of the MICS-G and were not noticed.

### Recommendations

Future research of enactments would be benefited by obtaining a larger random sample. This would permit greater generalization to the population of marital therapy clients. The sample would also need to be larger with all three categories of enactments being more equally represented. Perhaps an exploratory study on the use of enactments, especially negative enactments, in the current marital therapy field would need to be done.

One major change in future enactment research should focus on the therapists conducting the enactments. A larger number of therapists should be included and

they should cover all levels of experience, from therapists in training to the most seasoned veterans. One aspect of future research might want to compare the effectiveness of enactments performed by therapists who received specialized enactment training as compared to those conducting enactments without enactment training.

In summary, the hypothesis that positive enactments would increase positive and decrease negative communication behaviors was not supported by statistical analysis. However, slight increases in most communication behaviors showed that positive enactments may have influenced communication skills overall. The second hypothesis, that negative enactments would increase negative and decrease positive communication behaviors, was not tested because there were not enough cases to support statistical analyses. The third hypothesis stated that neutral enactments would not affect the communication behaviors of the participants. This was supported by statistical analysis. However, the trends in the data showed that the majority of communication behaviors were changing to a small degree. The clinical significance of this study is that enactments seem to increase communication between couples. The increase may appear to be minor, but the therapeutic impact of that minor increase may be great.

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## APPENDICES

## Appendix A. MICS-G Scoring Sheet

## Marital Interaction Coding System—Global (MICS—G)

## Scoring Sheet

	Cue Impression		Category Rating	
	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife
Conflict			—	—
1. complain	—	—		
2. criticize	—	—		
3. negative mind reading	—	—		
4. put downs/insults	—	—		
5. negative commands	—	—		
6. hostility	—	—		
7. sarcasm	—	—		
Problem Solving			—	—
1. problem description	—	—		
2. proposing solution	—	—		
3. compromise	—	—		
4. reasonableness	—	—		
Validation			—	—
1. agreement	—	—		
2. approval	—	—		
3. accept responsibility	—	—		

4. assent

5. receptivity

6. encouragement

### Invalidation

1. disagreement

2. denial or responsibility

3. changing of subject

4. consistent interruption

5. turn-off behaviors

6. domineering behaviors

### Facilitation

1. positive mind reading

2. paraphrasing

3. humor

4. positive physical contact

5. smile/laugh

6. open posture

### Withdrawal

1. negation

2. no response

3. turns away



- 4. increased distance                    \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. erects barriers                    \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. noncontributive                    \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Weiss, R. L., & Tolman, A. O. (1990). The marital interaction coding system—global (MICS—G): A global companion to the MICS. Behavioral Assessment, 12, 271-294.

## Appendix B. Enactment Coding Instructions

## ENACTMENT CODING INSTRUCTIONS

### **Enactment Defined**

An enactment, for the purpose of this study, is defined as a therapeutic process in which the couple talks directly to each other and the therapist coaches the content and the process of the couple's interaction. Reid and Helmer (1986) include enactments as a common technique used in family therapy. The use of enactments in couple therapy can facilitate several different processes including changing communication patterns within the session, discussing underlying emotion, developing problem solving abilities, producing new insight into the relationship, and giving the couple the ability to emphasize the strengths of each partner. The use of enactments may also lead to a stronger therapeutic relationship and the generalization of behaviors outside of the therapy setting.

### **Enactment Coding**

Due to the absence of research on enactments in couple therapy, no system exists for the coding of the enactment type. Each enactment section of the video tape will be viewed and given a positive, negative, or neutral designation. This will be done through paying particular attention to the exact instructions given by the therapist that leads up to and results in an enactment. These instructions will show how the therapist intended to use the enactment as an intervention, whether positive, negative, or neutral.

The identification of an enactment as positive, negative, or neutral has not been previously attempted. However, Woolley (1995) identified eight methods to use within enactments to promote enactment success (these are provided at the end of

these instructions). These eight methods may give insight into which method may produce a positive, negative, or neutral enactment. The eight methods are structuring, giving directives, focusing on affect, giving support, producing insight into the process of the communication, teaching skills, encouraging positive statements, and confronting negative statements (Woolley, 1995). Woolley (1995) found that therapists rarely used encouraging positive and confronting negative statements.

The eight methods to successful enactments provide some guidelines to define which enactments are positive, negative, or neutral. Some of the eight clearly belong to the positive enactment category (giving support, teaching skills, and encouraging positive statements). **All behaviors on the part of the therapist which are intended to teach skills that will bring about positive change in the couple's relationship are positive enactments.** Or if the therapists gives instructions to the couple that are intended to bring about positive change when carried out, it is a positive enactment. If the therapist instructs the couple to reenact a fight without changing how the fight was carried out, then it is a Negative enactment. The intention would be to see how the couple fights or to increase the conflict within the couple. IF the therapist is not teaching skills, having the clients practice the skills, having the couple experience positive change, or instructing the clients to reenact a fight, **THEN THE ENACTMENT IS CONSIDERED TO BE NEUTRAL, neither positive nor negative.** If the couple spontaneously turns and begins to speak directly to each other, without direct

instruction from the therapist, it is considered a neutral enactment. However, if the therapist gives instruction to the couple after they spontaneously begin to speak directly to each other, then decide according to the therapist's instructions. The structuring method simply refers to setting up the enactment by having the couple turn their chairs and face each other and is generally considered a neutral enactment on its own. The other four methods, giving directives, focusing on affect, producing insight into the process of the communication, and confronting negative statements, are designed to produce positive, negative, or neutral enactments according to the therapist's desire. For example, a directive could be given to reenact an argument in order for the therapist to be able to assess the couple's negative communication behaviors (Minuchin, 1974). However, a directive could also be given to the couple to reenact an argument using newly learned problem solving skills (Baucom & Epstein, 1990), which would be considered a positive enactment. For this reason, the enactments will be coded according to specific verbal cues used by the therapist. An enactment will be coded as positive when the therapist says statements such as "help your partner better understand what you are saying" or "discuss the situation using the problem solving skills we have been learning" or other similar statements. Cues that will identify positive enactments include any instruction or comment by the therapist that is intended to increase communication interactions involving problem solving, facilitation, and validation.

An enactment will be coded in the negative category when the therapist requests the couple to reenact an argument without altering it or for the couple to use

negative statements. This is conceptualized as occurring when the therapist directs one partner to confront or express negative emotion towards the other partner. Negative enactment cues will occur when the therapist instructs the couple to use communication behaviors that will increase conflict, invalidation, and withdrawal.

When the therapist uses statements like "turn your chairs so you are facing each other and discuss your homework assignment" or other neutral statements, the enactment will be coded as neutral. Neutral enactments will lack specific cues for particular communication change and will be more general in purpose.

### **Enactment Interventions**

Woolley and Wampler (1995) identified and defined nine possible techniques to use within an enactment to promote its success. These techniques are structuring, giving directives, calling attention to affect, giving support, pointing out process, teaching, encouraging positive statements, confronting negative statements, and neutral alignment. These nine will be discussed in greater detail.

Structuring NEUTRAL. Structuring is mentioned by Guernsey, Brock, and Coufal (1986) as a primary therapeutic interventions used in the Relationship Enhancement modality. Behavioral Marital Therapy also employs structuring and considers the use of structuring as a key therapy technique (Gottman & Leiblum, 1974; Jacobson & Margolin, 1979). Structuring entails explaining to the couple procedures for the enactment and instructing the couple to follow those

procedures. An example of structuring would be when a therapists asks a couple to select a current problem in the relationship. The therapist would then ask the couple to turn and face each other and discuss that problem. If the couple breaks from procedure and begins to talk directly to the therapist, the therapist can remind the partner of the procedures and ask the partners to continue talking directly to each other (Woolley & Wampler, 1995; Woolley, 1995).

Structuring will permit the couple to understand the procedures and format of an enactment. It may help promote a successful enactment by keeping the couple talking to each other and not to the therapist.

Giving Directives POS, NEG, NEUT. Directives consist of instructing the couple to communicate or behave in a specified manner. For example, if a partner raises his or her voice and the therapist says, "Please use a softer voice," the therapist is directing the client Greenberg & Johnson, 1986. Directing couple communication and behavior may help increase skills that may be needed to learn what to do and by having the couple perform those skill in the session.

Calling Attention to Affect POS, NEG, NEUT. An affectively oriented intervention is any statement that involves discussing or referring to an emotion. For example, "How are you feeling," "So you are feeling scared," and "Tell her about that emotion," are each affectively oriented statements.

Discussing underlying emotion may contribute to a successful enactment through at least two processes. As a couple expresses their emotions, they share

an experience that can facilitate a sense of greater understanding of the other partner. When emotions are shared, the meaning of the particular situation can be investigated. This investigation will permit an openness in the relationship, that in turn may lead to greater empathy between the partners (Greenberg & Johnson, 1986; Woolley & Wampler, 1995; Woolley, 1995). For example, a husband might not understand why his wife wants him to call and check in with her, but he will likely understand her feelings and fear of abandonment.

Giving Support POS. A supportive statement is comprised of any statement by the therapist that offers encouragement to at least one member of the couple or their relationship (Woolley & Wampler, 1995; Woolley, 1995). "You are working well together" or "I think you are right on " are examples of supportive statements.

Supportive statements may contribute to successful enactments through helping to establish and maintain the therapeutic relationship. The therapeutic relationship has been found to account for approximately 30% of the change a client may experience in therapy (Miller, Duncan, & Hubble, 1996).

Pointing Out Process POS, NEG, NEUT. This type of enactment intervention is when the therapist makes the process of the couple's communication overt. This refers to when the therapist points out how the couple communicates. Many couples may have never thought about how they



communicate. One example could be if the therapist said, "You seem to interrupt your spouse quite often." Pointing out how the couple communicates may give them the opportunity to see what negative patterns may exist and how they can alter those patterns to create more positive interactions.

Teaching POS. Teaching during an enactment is when the therapist instructs the couple on how they are to do something and why they are doing it. An example of a teaching statement could be, "It is important to use soft voice tones while talking to each other because soft voice tones are less likely to trigger anger in your partner" (Woolley & Wampler, 1995; Woolley, 1995). Moderate teaching may help the client understand what types of skills they need to develop and why they are doing something. The therapist must however maintain a balance when using a teaching intervention. A disproportionate amount of teaching may damage the therapeutic relationship and may interrupt the couple's communication within the enactment.

Encouraging Positive Statements POS. Encouraging positive statements is when the therapist recommends that the client communicate in a more positive manner to her or his partner. "Say that again in a more positive way," and "I like how tenderly you are talking to each other, keep going" (Woolley & Wampler, 1995; Woolley, 1995) are examples of statements that encourage positive interactions. The goal of encouraging positive statements during an enactment on

the part of the therapist would be to create a an atmosphere that will facilitate the use of more positive statements by the couple when not in the therapy session.

Confronting Negative Statements POS, NEG, NEUT. Confronting negatives is when the therapist points out negative interactions in which the couple are or have engaged. By pointing out the negative statements, the couple can better understand their own communication style. This may give them the awareness that may lead to a change in the number of negative interactions. An example of confronting a negative statement may be, "This time allow your partner to finish without you interrupting."

Neutral Alignment NEUT. Therapists should maintain a neutral stance in therapy. What this means is that the therapist should maintain a balanced therapeutic relationship with all members of the system. If the therapist continually sides with one client, the other client is likely to be offended. This could in turn lead to an increase in negative interactions and interfere with the enactment (Woolley & Wampler, 1995; Woolley, 1995).

In order to clarify the process of identifying positive, negative, and neutral enactments, a list of behaviors consistent with either positive, negative, or neutral enactments will now be provided.

When the therapist requests that the couple interact according to the following behaviors it will indicate that the enactment should be coded as positive:

Agree: Statement of agreement with spouse's opinion.

**Approve:** Respondent favors spouse's or couple's attributes, actions, or statements.

**Accept Responsibility:** A statement which conveys "I" or "we" are responsible for a problem.

**Assent:** Listener says "yeah", nods head, or parrots, to facilitate communication.

**Attention:** Listener maintains eye contact for 3 seconds.

**Compliance:** Fulfills direct request for immediate action within 10 seconds.

**Compromise:** A negotiation of mutually exchanged behaviors.

**Disengage:** A statement expressing the desire not to talk about a specific issue at that time.

**Excuse Other:** Excusing partner's behavior or statement by providing a reason for that behavior or statement.

**Humor:** light-hearted humor, not sarcasm.

**Metacommunication:** Statement which attempts to direct the flow of the conversation.

**Mindread Positive:** Statement of fact which assumes a positive mindset or motivation of the partner.

**Negative Solution:** A solution proposing the termination of or a decrease in the frequency of some behavior.

**Positive Physical Contact:** Any affectionate touch, hug, kiss, etc.

**Positive Solution:** A solution proposing the initiation of or an increase in the

frequency of some behavior.

Paraphrase/Reflection: A statement which mirrors or restates a receding statement of the other.

Question: any interrogative statement.

Smile/Laugh: Smile or laughter.

When the therapist requests that the couple interact according to the following behaviors it will indicate that the enactment should be coded as negative:

Criticize: Hostile statement of unambiguous dislike or disapproval of a specific behavior of the spouse.

Disagree: Statement or non-verbal gesture of disagreement with one's spouse.

Disapprove: Statement of unambiguous dislike or disapproval of a specific behavior of the spouse.

Deny Responsibility: Statement which conveys "I" or "we" are not responsible for a problem.

Dysphoric Affect: Affect communicating depression or sadness, any self-complaint or whiny voice tone.

Excuse: when any reason is given of a specific problematic behavior, previously defined within the negotiation.

Interrupt: Listener breaks in and disrupts the flow to the other's speech.

Mindread Negative: Statement of fact which assumes a negative mindset or

motivation of the partner.

Non-compliance: Failure to fulfill direct request for immediate action within 10 seconds.

Off Topic: Comments irrelevant to the topic of the discussion, including statements directed toward the therapist, about the therapist, or about the physical environment during the enactment.

Put Down: A verbal statement or non-verbal behavior that demeans or mocks the partner. Also sarcasm.

Talk: Inaudible speech or "incomplete" speech units.

Threat: A verbal or non-verbal threat of physical or emotional harm.

Turn-off: Non-verbal gestures which communicate disgust, displeasure, disapproval, or disagreement.

Voice Tone: Indicates hostile or negative voice tone.

Withdrawal: Broad category involving verbal and non-verbal behavior that implies that a partner is pulling back from the interaction.

If the therapist does not request that the couple interact according to the above mentioned behaviors it will indicate that the enactment should be coded as neutral. Please keep in mind that the list of behaviors is not exhaustive. Take into account all the information within the coding instructions, not merely the list of behaviors before coding the enactment as neutral.

### Appendix C. Scores for Negative Enactments

Raw Data for Husbands' Pre- and  
Post-Negative Enactment Scores

<u>n=2</u>	<u>Pre- Enactment</u>		<u>Post- Enactment</u>	
	Case 1	Case 2	Case 1	Case2
Conflict	0	2	0	3
Problem Solving	1	2	1	2
Validation	1	2	2	3
Invalidation	0	2	0	2
Facilitation	1	2	0	1
Withdrawal	1	1	0	1

Raw Data for Husbands' Pre- and  
Post-Negative Enactment Scores

<u>n=2</u>	<u>Pre-</u> <u>Enactment</u>		<u>Post-</u> <u>Enactment</u>	
	Case 1	Case 2	Case 1	Case2
Conflict	1	2	1	2
Problem Solving	0	1	1	2
Validation	0	1	1	1
Invalidation	1	3	0	2
Facilitation	1	1	1	1
Withdrawal	1	1	0	1



Means, Standard Deviations, and Effect Sizes for

Husbands' Pre- and Post-Negative Enactment Scores

<u>n</u> =2	<u>Pre-</u> <u>Enactment</u>		<u>Post-</u> <u>Enactment</u>		<u>ES</u>
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	
Conflict	1.00	1.41	1.50	2.12	0.28
Problem Solving	1.50	0.71	1.50	0.71	0.00
Validation	1.50	0.71	2.50	0.71	1.41
Invalidation	1.00	1.41	1.00	1.41	0.00
Facilitation	1.00	0.00	0.50	0.71	1.39
Withdrawal	1.00	0.00	0.50	0.71	1.39

Note. ES reported in absolute values.

Means, Standard Deviations, and Effect Sizes for

Wives' Pre- and Post-Negative Enactment Scores

<u>n</u> =2	<u>Pre-</u> <u>Enactment</u>		<u>Post-</u> <u>Enactment</u>		<u>ES</u>
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	
Conflict	1.50	0.71	1.50	0.71	0.00
Problem Solving	0.50	0.71	1.50	0.71	1.41
Validation	0.50	0.71	1.00	0.00	1.39
Invalidation	2.00	1.41	1.00	1.41	0.71
Facilitation	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
Withdrawal	1.00	0.00	0.50	0.71	1.39

Note. ES reported in absolute values.